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Friday, April 4, 2008

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ASG collects \$600K more last month compared to same time last year

The American Samoa Government raked in \$4,757,170 in February 2008, increasing the cash collection of local funds by \$600,000 compared to the same time last year.

This is according to the Monthly Financial Overview Report for local funds for February 2008 submitted by ASG Treasurer Gaea Perefoti Failautusi to Governor Togiola Tulafono.

The report states that only nine ASG departments and agencies failed to exceed their February 2007 collections.

The exceptions are the Administrative Law Office, the Election Office, interest income, Public Works, the EPA trust fund, the Flag Day fund, ASTCA, and bonds reduction – all of which didn't collect any local funds for both February 2007 and February 2008.

The LBJ loan brought in \$91,667 which is the same amount it collected the same time last year.

The most impressive increase came from Road Maintenance which went penniless in collections in February 2007 but bounced back with a bang, collecting \$46,450 by the end of last month.

The Office of Property Management and Traffic Violations followed suit. Property Management failed to collect a single cent last February but managed to rake in \$14,785 last month, while Traffic Violations netted zero in collections last February but responded by bringing in \$8,375 last month.

Public Health also upped their collections. DOH collected only \$3,015 last February, but more than doubled its collections to \$6,720 last month.

The following is a summary of cash collections for each noted funding source, department, and agency:

SOURCE	Feb. 2008	Feb. 2007
Revenue	300,092	284,171
Tax Office	1,198,890	1,155,444
Immigration Office	161,286	109,953
Immigration Bond	63,193	36,221
Procurement	21,110	11,595
Agriculture	20,950	14,035
DPS	933	702
Vital Statistics	6,492	5,445
Attorney General	30,040	29,185
Judicial	37,820	27,241
Weights and Measures	670	0
Sports Complex	12,666	12,609
Grants Fund	61,957	12,249
Customs	1,655,841	1,215,057
Customs Bond Collections	161,127	105,485
Port	255,493	148,263

ASG RADIO PROGRAM

With: Gov. Togiola Tulafono

On: Showers of Blessings FM 104.7 Saturdays @ 7a.m.- 9:00a.m. Call: 699-8123/8124

DBAS gets unqualified opinion for 2007 audit

The CPA firm of Holsinger & Associates from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania conducted a financial audit for year ending December 31, 2007 for the Development Bank of American Samoa, and the end result was DBAS earning a “clean or unqualified opinion.”

This has been DBAS’s grade, so to speak, for the third year in a row.

DBAS also got an unqualified opinion for the single audit, or the audit of federal programs.

According to DBAS President Utu Abe Malae, an unqualified opinion is the best one offered by CPA auditors when auditing the financial statements of a company. He said this means the auditors believe in the company’s financial reports.

DBAS could have gotten a “bad opinion,” which is a qualified audit that means the auditors take exception to an accounting method used by the company, or the lack of disclosure of an important item; or a “worse opinion” which is an adverse one where the auditors believe the deviations are so serious that the statements are misleading.

Utu reports that DBAS suffered an operating loss of \$454,489; however, the bank was able to offset the loss by capital contributions of \$857,887 which resulted in a net asset increase of \$403,398.

As required by local statute, the financial audit report has already been submitted to the Fono and the Governor.

Utu said that the Bank’s financial statements and notes for 2007 reflect that DBAS is undercapitalized, meaning the bank can use a lot more money in order to make more loans for the niche market.

In addition to the huge allowance for bad loans, the accounting is more conservative than in was four years ago, meaning that income interest from delinquent loans of 90 days is no longer counted.

Utu said that the business loan portfolio performed poorly, even for a development bank where risks are high. And although the bank suffered an operating loss, this was more than offset by other contributions, hence the importance of grants.

Lastly, Utu said the bank had a few liabilities compared to assets, and audit fees can be reduced when the accounting and loan staff is prepared and competent.

DHSS opens new Pua Center in Nu’uuli

The Department of Human and Social Services has opened the doors of its new Pua Center in Nu’uuli. The Pua center is for clients enrolled in the Day Treatment Program which was transferred to DHSS after it was sub-granted to the LBJ for two decades.

The transfer was made following a mutual agreement between the two agencies.

The program is funded by a Mental Health Block Grant and offers a wide range of services that cater to the needs of individuals who suffer from mental illnesses.

The launching of the Pua Clinic was a community awareness event for clients of the program, including their family members. The new clinic is housed at the old DHSS child care facility in Nu’uuli.

The program works in collaboration with other agencies to connect clients and refer them to other services that will ultimately help them become independent individuals.

HISTORICAL NOTES

By: Stan Sorensen, Historian, Office of the Governor

On March 29, 1942, the 3rd Battalion of the 7th Marines and Battery C of the 1st Battalion of the 11th Marines departed New River, North Carolina en route to Tutuila for further assignment to the Wallis Islands, which were part of the Samoan Defense Group.

On March 30, 1943, the Battalion Medical Officer of the First Samoan Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, informed the Battalion Surgeon of the 7th Defense Battalion that "Instruction was given continually to hospital corpsmen on preliminary treatment of gunshot wounds of the head, chest and abdomen. This instruction was the result of several successful suicide attempts. Some of the Samoan Marines had felt disgraced in the face of coming mast punishments [non-court-martial punishments by the company commander] and had taken their own lives."

On March 31, 1898, a headline in the *New York Times* read, "William Churchill Missing. It is feared the ex-Consul General to Samoa has killed himself."

On March 31, 1899, Mata'afa Iosefo's forces defeated Malietoa Tanumafili's army in yet another phase of Samoa's ongoing, European-inspired civil war.

On March 31, 1943, the 2nd Marine Brigade opened a revised Jungle Warfare Training Center in "Mormon" (i.e., Malaeimi) Valley, American Samoa.

On March 31, 1945, the U.S. Navy's Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 504 left Tutuila, and the Public Works Department reverted to a peacetime footing.

On March 31, 1961, "The quasi-government producers-type cooperative, Samoan Industry, ceased operation [in American Samoa], and was abolished by an act of the Legislature."

On April 1, 1900, twenty of Tutuila's highest chiefs wrote to Governor Benjamin F. Tilley, expressing their pleasure at being under the American flag, and promising to "obey all laws and statutes made by the government or those appointed by the government to legislate and govern." They added "let good and useful laws be made, let the Foundation of Government stand forever."

On April 2, 1909, Tui Manu'a Elisara died on Ta'u at age 45, possibly from influenza. Governor John F. Parker paid tribute to him by saying, "Tui Manu'a was the last of a line of kings in the Manu'a Group, his title being changed to District Governor from the date of the hoisting of the American flag in those islands. He was a devout Christian and a faithful supporter of government, and his loss....is keenly felt."

On April 2, 1942, the first airplanes of Marine Air Group 13 (MAG-13) landed at American Samoa's Tafuna Air Base, "just as the airstrip was brought to a usable state. Few of the Marine pilots were experienced, and training conditions were difficult. Heat, bugs, mud and rain made even the construction of an adequate camp difficult. While attempting to train as aviators, the men of MAG-13 also put in time as infantry, each squadron functioning as one company of two platoons plus one .30 caliber machine gun platoon. The group was supported in these defensive efforts by a tank company, a heavy weapons platoon, a three-inch [gun] battery, and one section of the island's barrage balloon squadron."

DPW to relocate all operations to Tafuna compound

All operations of the Department of Public Works will relocate permanently to Tafuna by the end of this year.

Last month, the Civil Highway Division along with Lands and Survey became the first of DPW's divisions to move over to the Tafuna compound where the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Division and Motor Pool are located.

Currently, Public Works occupies half of the second floor of the Executive Office Building (EOB) in Utulei. Their conference room is widely used to host many events including meetings and workshops for different government agencies and organizations.

It is reported that the move is necessary in order to free up some office spaces at the EOB, although it is unknown who will occupy the space once DPW completely moves out.

DPW director Taeaotui Punafofo Tilei said yesterday that the entire Public Works staff including the Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Division, the Director's Office, and Finance and Administration will all be operating out of Tafuna after Flag Day in April.

Taeaotui said that renovations to the Tafuna office were carried out using money from local funds while the Federal Highway Administration provided some funding assistance for the relocation of the Civil Highway Division.

Senate approves bill for absentee military voting

The Senate passed during a special Saturday session a piece of legislation that provides absentee registration for American Samoa military members who want to register as qualified electors and cast ballots in the gubernatorial election and the race for the House of Representatives.

The bill passed in its third reading after Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Senator Tua'ololo Vaivao Manaia of Maoputasi District presided over a hearing that heard testimony from Chief Election Officer Soliai Tuipine and Election Office legal counsel Gwen Taui'iliili-Langkilde.

It was Tua'ololo who recommended that "this important piece of legislation" be passed to support the sons and daughters of American Samoa who are serving in the US Armed Forces overseas.

The sentiment was echoed by other senators who showed their support of the bill by issuing its stamp of approval.

Soliai and Taui'iliili-Langkilde also voiced their support of the measure, along with all the amendments which were made following discussions between the Election Office, the Office of the Governor, and the Legislature's legal team.

Under the bill, a uniformed services voter is exempt from having to register in person at the Election Office in order to vote during the gubernatorial election and local House race. The military personnel who wish to register as a qualified elector for local elective offices must provide that American Samoa is their home of record or domicile.

The bill provides that the Chief Election Officer establish an absentee registration and voting procedure to afford maximum access to the polls by qualified absent uniformed services voters and adopt such forms as necessary to implement provisions of this act.

At a minimum, such forms require the applicant to furnish the information called for on the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), supplemented with the applicant's home of record/legal domicile, date of departure from American Samoa, and verification of applicant's active military status.

Additionally, a spouse or dependent of a uniformed services member shall provide verification of their dependent status. The Chief Election Officer shall also establish procedures applicable to elections subsequent to the applicant's initial registration.

The bill now goes to the House of Representatives for their review and approval.

It is hopeful that the bill is passed before the current session ends on Friday April 4, 2008, so that the provision will be in place for the general election scheduled for later this year in November.

The Administration supports the passage of the bill which will go into effect immediately once approved by the Fono and signed by the Governor.

Retired US Army CW-5 Save Liuto Tuitele appointed as associate judge

Governor Togiola Tulafono has appointed Save Liuto Tuitele of Leone as an Associate Judge for the High Court of American Samoa. Save is a retired Chief Warrant Officer in the US Army.

In a memo, Governor Togiola said that the appointment was made with a recommendation from Chief Justice Michael Kruse. Save's nomination will now have to be submitted to the Senate for confirmation.

Save was educated locally before he departed the territory for the US Army, and to continue his education. He holds two bachelors degrees – one in business administration and another in criminal justice management.

Save and his wife Sara relocated back to the territory in 2004 and since then, Save has helped to develop and design training programs for the Department of Public Safety.

Togiola said he is confident in Save's abilities to execute his duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Constitution and all applicable laws of the territory.

DBAS gets two DOI grants totaling more than \$100K

President of the Development Bank of American Samoa Utu Abe Malae has confirmed that DBAS was recently awarded two separate grants from the Department of Interior. According to Utu, DBAS was awarded \$80,000 for the design of energy efficient and durable, affordable homes, and another \$27,000 is to help with institutional strengthening of the bank; in particular, to pay for the participation of the bank in regional, national, and international advocacy or trade organizations.

Utu said that Jilla Piroozmandi prepared the grant applications with the help of Jason Betham and other DBAS staff members.

The two grants are from the DOI's Office of Insular Affairs' Operations and Maintenance Improvement Program (OMIP).

With respect to the first grant and its purpose, Utu said DBAS will soon be requesting the services of designers who are competent in 'energy efficient' design.

Utu said they will definitely take into account ASPA's proposed rules regarding the inter-tie to the ASPA electric grid for customers who generate their own electricity.

As for the \$27,000 grant that will be used to help pay the cost of participation in the international and national trade or advocacy associations, Utu said that knowledge gained from such participation can be leveraged into immense savings or opportunities for the bank, as face to face interaction can be more effective than just researching on the internet or sending e-mails.

Fipe Leiataua retires after more than 30 years of ASG service

Head of the Finance and Administration Division of the Department of Public Works Ms. Fipe Leiataua has finally retired after dedicating more than 30 years of service to the American Samoa Government.

Leiataua's retirement was celebrated through a special farewell luncheon hosted by DPW director Taeaotui Punafo Tilei and the Public Works staff in their conference room at the EOB in Utulei.

Leiataua was showered with well wishes, words of encouragement, and praises by DPW deputy directors Jun Duldalao and Faleosina Faiai Voigt, and office supervisor Adrienne Penei Sewell.

Leiataua was given a chance to offer a few words and with tears in her eyes and a shaky voice, she bid farewell to what she calls her "second family."

"What I will miss the most is you guys - my co-workers, my friends, my family," she said. "Our fun work environment has made our office a great place to be over the past years."

Taeaotui said of Leiataua, "You definitely have a crown of compassion and love." He added that since he has served as Public Works director, Leiataua has always been a great confidant, giving him advice and helping him anytime he asked for it.

Leiataua left that same night for the US mainland.



Fipe Leiataua (sitting) who retired after more than 30 years of service to ASG. Leiataua was treated to a farewell luncheon hosted by DPW director Taeaotui Punafo Tilei and the Public Works staff.

DBAS Easter Home Renovation Loan Program nets 55 applications

President of the Development Bank of American Samoa Utu Abe Malae said that a total of 55 people applied for the Easter Home Renovation Loan Program.

As of March 27, a total of 25 approvals totaling \$248,500 were granted, while another 26 applications totaling approximately \$260,000 are still pending. As with the holiday home renovation loan program last year, the total dollar amount of approved loans for the Easter special has exceeded the initial announcement of \$200,000 available in direct financing for the program.

Check disbursement, according to Utu, will occur by the third week of April.

Funding for the Easter special program came from customer loan repayments.

The good news is, if you missed your chance to apply for the Easter home renovation loan program, DBAS will again be offering a similar special around July 4.

Special loan programs offered by DBAS loan out a maximum amount of \$10,000 per applicant, with a maximum term of 84 months (7 years) at an affordable fixed rate of 9.50%.

Prior to Easter, DBAS awarded a total of \$350,000 to locals during their holiday home repairs program late last year.

DBAS initially announced that they only had \$200K available for that specific program at the time but when it came time to disburse the checks, the total for all approved loans amounted to \$350,000 DBAS boasts an approval rate of about 76%.

MCSAP continues to crusade against commercial vehicle violations

While tinted windows, fancy decals, and colorful dashboard and windshield decorations have become a trend of unique personalization for local owners of private vehicles, such additions and enhancements violate local laws pertaining to commercial vehicles and anyone found to be in violation will be slapped with a citation.

Commercial vehicles include buses and container trucks which are randomly inspected by officers from the Motor Carrier Safety Administration Program (MCSAP) under the Department of Public Safety.

MCSAP's Lt. Laolagi told the Tapuitema this morning that there are local laws that apply to commercial vehicles, and their job is to ensure that those laws are enforced.

Laolagi explained that inspections are ranked in different levels from 1-3.

A level one inspection requires the driver to provide documentation like a valid commercial driver's license and registration information.

A level two inspection calls for an overall inspection of the vehicles exterior, from front to back and side to side, including the tires to make sure all the tires are up to par and the nuts and bolts are properly screwed on.

A level three inspection requires MCSAP officers to conduct an inspection of the bottom of the vehicle, to check the brake pads and look for oil leaks, among other things.

"Basically, we are checking to make sure that everything is in proper working condition and there are no problems," Laolagi said. "Our purpose is to ensure that commercial vehicles are safe enough to be driven on the main road."

Once a driver is cited, it is up to the court to determine the proper punishment.

When asked if there is a weight restriction on loads being carried by container trucks, Laolagi explained that they are waiting for the installation of a weigh station but currently, they usually conduct their checks at the Faga'alu Park, as this is the only place with enough space for them to carry out their job. (Heavy loads being transported on the main road have been named as a contributor to the deteriorating road conditions).

As for buses, Laolagi said that most of the buses in operation today are new, and while they can conduct inspections and issue citations for violators, they do not have the power to take the buses off the road.

He explained that once a citation is issued, commercial vehicle owners have up to 15 days to address and correct the problem. During that time period, the vehicle can still be operated unless MCSAP puts the vehicle out of service (denoted on a sticker placed on the vehicle), meaning the vehicle cannot be in operation until the problem is fixed.

Laolagi pointed out that up until recently, buses that operate with two wheels on the front (one on each side), and four wheels on the rear (two on each side), were permitted to continue operating even after one of the back wheels was damaged.

But under a new directive from the MCSAP office in Honolulu, local MCSAP officers now have the authority to put those same buses out of service.

The local MCSAP division consists of five officers under the direction of Captain Vai Maiava.

Proposed bill calls for establishment of commission to study alternative energy sources

A proposed measure that establishes an Alternate Research Commission to study and evaluate alternative energy sources has been introduced in the local Legislature.

According to the measure, the commission will be composed of seven members representing both the public and private sectors, and their goal is to evaluate the territory's current electric power supply system and assess its strengths and weaknesses, before providing recommendations and improvements.

Commission members will include representatives from the Department of Commerce, the American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency, the Territorial Energy Office, and the American Samoa Power Authority.

The three members who will represent the public will be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Fono.

The bill allocates \$150,000 in excess revenues from fiscal year 2008 to support the commission's work.

According to the proposed measure, the commission is to consider the requirements and special needs of the Manu'a and Swains Islands, in addition to identifying and considering any other area of the territory which, due to its location, requires specialized treatment in terms of meeting its energy needs.

The proposed bill comes at a time when the issue of soaring electricity rates has become the hottest topic of conversation. Two weeks ago, a measure proposing that ASPA be dissolved, with its assets and operations being returned to the Executive Branch, was defeated in the Senate.

Governor Togiola Tulafono himself has addressed the issue, announcing during his weekend radio program earlier this month that he plans to establish a commission or committee to look for ways to reduce electricity costs, including alternative energy like wind, solar power, and the use of ocean waves.

The Governor said the commission's findings will be used over a 10-year period to address renewable energy resources for American Samoa, instead of continuance reliance on imported fossil fuel.

He added that while it is true that oil prices will drop, it won't be that much.

Togiola has reviewed ASPA's rates and said that while the base rate is lower than before, it is the continued increase in fuel costs that is the major contributing factor to the increase in electric rates.

Meanwhile, ASPA's Chief Executive Officer and general counsel Michael Keyser said through a statement last week that ASPA management has been working very hard to reduce the costs of electricity and at the end of the month, ASPA will be submitting two grant proposals to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Utilities Service High Cost of Energy Grant Program.

These are competitive grants, so there is no guarantee they will be funded.

The first proposal is a waste heat recovery and thermal delivery system which, if successful, would result in roughly a 10% annual savings to all residential customers.

The second proposal is a solar power project to help ASPA's low income customers. Under this project, concentrated solar power (CSP) parabolic troughs would be installed on roughly one acre of land at ASPA's Tafuna compound.

A comprehensive rate study is now underway and expected to conclude later this year in August. ASPA has retained the services of Economists.com which will analyze all of ASPA's costs company-wide and form the basis for revised rates.

ASPA is expected to hold multiple public hearings in the coming months to obtain input on the matter, from the public and other leaders.



*Ms. Tani'ilelagi
Langkilde-
Fernando selected
as PBDC Fellow
for summer
2008.
Tani will begin
her PBDC
assignment in
Mid-May.
(See story on page
7)*

*Loring Fairvae teaches
the monthly adult
introductory computer
course at the Feleti
Barstow Public
Library. He is also
the instructor for the
first ever "Excel"
program computer
class set to begin
March 31.
(See story on page 8)*



DOC program planner Taui Langkilde-Fernando selected as PBDC fellow

The Pacific Basin Development Council (PBDC) office in Honolulu has informed Governor Togiola Tulafono of Ms. Taui'ilelagi Langkilde-Fernando's selection as PBDC Fellow for summer 2008. Taui will begin her PBDC assignment in Mid-May.

PBDC Executive Director Carolyn Imamura said that the internship focuses on the challenges of development in a global society, and the Fellow will learn skills and methods developed by PBDC to more efficiently or effectively meet contemporary demands of economic development practitioners.

"I think that my participation in the PBDC Fellows program is going to benefit both myself and the government in what I will be able to walk away with after the Fellowship has been completed, and what I will be able to contribute to the government at such time," Taui told the Tapuitema.

Taui is currently a program planner with the Department of Commerce, and she has been involved in numerous economic development projects at both the local and federal levels.

"The skills and methods that I will learn from the PBDC will be valuable tools that I will be able to apply to my job, and I am confident that such tools will help the government with reaching its goals regarding economic development," Taui said. "I am really glad that programs like the PBDC Fellows program is in place to garner the participation of young economic practitioners like myself so that we can go back to our governments and constructively contribute to achieving the economic development goals of our island and the Pacific region as a whole."

Governor Togiola Tulafono expressed his delight with Taui's selection saying, "I am extremely happy and honored for Taui to be selected to serve as PBDC Fellow beginning this summer. To involve our young people and increase their participation in regional work is inspiring and good for government. The Fellow experience with the Pacific Basin Development Council is a valuable resource for expanding her horizons and opportunities."

The Governor added, "It is my sincere hope that the experience is a stimulating one for Taui in being part of a regional organization where the interests of American Samoa and the other Pacific Island Territories and the State of Hawaii are represented so competently."

According to Togiola, the three-month PBDC Fellows program is to build strategic, regional planning capacity within member governments.

Taui said she is interested in the PBDC because her current career path is in economic development and planning, which the PBDC addresses in its goals and the Fellows program.

"Everything that I have read about the PBDC and its role in regional economic planning and cooperation has been very positive and progressive, and I am very eager to engage in the methods and skills the PBDC exercises in the area of economic regional cooperation," Taui offered.

Taui has been with the DOC since May 2005, and is a Program Planner in the Planning Division. She works with economic development programs and special projects, and assists with the overall goals of ASG, DOC, and the Planning Division in the area of economic development.

Taui is 25 years old and currently resides in Malaeimi. She is one of four children born to Tamatoa Tony Langkilde and Bernadette "Pele" Scanlan Langkilde.

She is married to Fleance Mark Fernando, an electrical engineer currently employed with ASPA. Her hobbies include reading, learning classical piano, spending time with family and friends, hiking, music, and traveling.

Taui graduated from Faasa'o High School in 2000 and later graduated Cum Laude from The College of St. Catherine in St. Paul MN with a BA degree in International Business & Economics, with a minor in International Relations.

She says she plans to apply to various graduate schools around the US to pursue a joint Masters degree in the fields of Business Administration and Urban and Regional Planning/Sustainability. Her planned date of entry will either be Fall 2010 or Spring 2011.

"I'd just like to thank the Governor for his support and kind words on the announcement of my selection as PBDC Fellow for Summer 2008," Taui said. "I plan to serve my government to the best of my ability during my term as PBDC Fellow, and I look forward to returning to serve my people and my government with the knowledge I will gain through this experience. I would also like to thank my parents, grandparents, husband, and siblings for all the love and support they give me everyday."

Taui also extends her gratitude to the PBDC "for giving me this opportunity to work with them and learn from them, and I am looking forward to all the experiences that will come with this Fellows Program."

She concluded, "As always, I thank God for all His blessings on me and my family - every victory is His and comes from Him."

Feleti Barstow Public Library offers Windows “Excel” course for the very first time

The Feleti Barstow Public Library is offering for the first time ever, an introductory to Windows “Excel” computer class. The course will introduce participating students to basic skills like how to input information on to the spreadsheet, and introduction to different formulas.

The two-week class is scheduled to begin March 31 and will be held daily for two hours.

The course is open to anyone 18 years old and older who have a solid understanding of basic computer functions and Windows’ file management system properties.

The mandatory registration fee is \$10 which will be refunded back to the student upon successful completion of the class. Students who do not complete the course will not be entitled to a refund.

Course instructor Loring Faivae said that the class limit is 20 people, and most of the participants are being referred to the class by the Department of Human Resources, who has a program aimed at helping people advance in the computer field. He explained that this is the first time the “Excel” program is being offered at the library, and the course is being offered as a response to the high demand for it.

The Feleti Barstow Public Library offers adult introductory computer courses on a monthly basis. Faivae said that students who completed the introductory courses have often wondered how they could take their new found knowledge of computers a little further. Faivae explained, “The next step following the introductory computer course would be an introduction to the “Excel” program and that’s why we are now offering this course.”

According to Faivae, elementary school and high school students will be participating in computer classes of their own during the summer months, as he anticipates holding a month long session specifically for the youngsters.

The next two-week adult introductory computer course will once again be offered beginning April 21.

Students who complete both programs are issued a certificate of recognition.

To learn more about available programs, or to get more information on how to register for either of the computer courses, stop by the Feleti Barstow Public Library in Utulei today or call them directly at 633-5816.

The Library is open from 9am-5pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; 9am-7pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 10am-2pm on Saturdays. They are closed on Sunday and during all government holidays.

DPS takes hold of new Traffic Record Crash System

After years of having to manually write paper citations and tickets during traffic accidents, officers from the Department of Public Safety can now electronically report and collect data on car accidents for both private and commercial vehicles, thanks to the new Traffic Record Crash System which was unveiled yesterday morning.

The entire project, which includes four laptops, scanners, printers, and software installed in two police cars (Traffic Division) and two trucks for the Motor Carrier Safety Administration Program (MCSAP), cost over \$150K and was made possible through a collaborated effort between the Department of Public Works, the Department of Public Safety, the Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and the Judiciary (local court system).

Funding was provided through a grant from the Office of Highway Safety, under the US Department of Transportation (USDOT).

Project coordinator/manager Fred Scanlan, who also wrote the grant that brought us the new driver’s license program, said that the new system is a long time coming, as the software was purchased a few years ago (for \$64,000) but could never been used until now.

“This is a pilot testing phase, which will extend until later this year in November,” Scanlan explained. “At that time, we will fine tune the software and take a survey from the police officers who are using the system, to receive input from them which will then be sent to the company.”

Scanlan said that after the test pilot period, he anticipates moving to the next phase which will include the acquisition of cameras, as well as enhanced connectivity which will be carried out through collaboration with the American Samoa Telecommunications Authority (ASTCA) for island-wide coverage of the system, so all the information can be dumped into the server. (The new laptops allow for restricted internet access at this time).

According to Scanlan, if the system proves to be a success, he will seek additional funding to bring in more laptops and equipment. He explained that the court system will benefit from the new system, which will allow for electronic citations to be issued, as the person’s records and information will be installed into the laptops and become accessible to police officers.

“Issuing electronic tickets will help avoid a lot of paperwork,” Scanlan said. *(Continued on page 9)*

DPS new Traffic Record Crash System...*(continued from page 8)*

Lt. Laolagi of the MCSAP team added, "The new system will make everything so much easier for us. This is definitely a good sign that we are moving up," He explained that sometimes, citations and tickets that are called in are delayed because there is only one dispatcher on duty. But now, "with the new system, officers can issue electronic citations that are forwarded straight to the court and don't require telephone calls to the dispatcher."

Under the new system, police officers only need to swipe a person's driver's license. Once that is done, personal information will pop up on the laptop screen and from there, the officer will have to punch in the proper violation code before the information is electronically sent to the courts.

"With this, there will be no more retrieval in citations," Scanlan said.

Lt. Laolagi added, "Now drivers can't plead their way out of citations and tickets, as the information goes straight to the court system. The reports will be done right there on the spot. There will be no more begging and pleading to have the ticket/citation erased."

The new Traffic Record Crash System has been installed and will be put to use right away.



Project manager/coordinator for the new DPS traffic record crash system Fred Scanlan poses next to one of the new laptops that have been installed into four police vehicles. The new system allows for the electronic issuance of citations/tickets, and the program is hooked up to the local court system which means the information will be electronically sent to the courts.

The Department of Public Safety has installed new laptops, scanners, and printers into four of their vehicles. The laptops are part of the new traffic record crash system which came with a price tag of more than \$150,000. The new system reduces the use of paperwork and enables police officers to issue citations electronically, with the press of a button.



ASCC Student Receives Archaeology Scholarship

By James Kneubuhl, ASCC Press Officer

Marie Sina Faatuala, a Natural Resources major at the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) recently got the good news that the Washington, DC-based Society for American Archaeology (SAA) has selected her as the recipient of a \$4000 SAA Arthur C. Parker Scholarship for Archaeological Training for Native Americans and Native Hawaiians. The scholarship will enable Marie to attend this year's ASCC Summer Field School, an archaeological project that will take place in the neighboring Pacific country of Tokelau.

Marie, who lives in Petesa with her mother Liutautai Leupolu, says, "I really look forward to this trip because I have a great interest in the methods used to retrieve artifacts." ASCC archaeology instructor Dr. David Addison, who will accompany Marie to Tokelau, explained, "The field school course gives students a chance to get involved in a real research project and receive on-site training in archaeological field research methodology. The course will also involve students from the National University of Samoa and an international team of scientists from Hawaii, France, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, and the USA." Dr. Addison and Tautala Asaua from NUS have organized the whole project.

International organization dedicated to the research, interpretation, and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas, the SAA represents more than 7,000 professional, student, and vocational archaeologists working in government agencies, colleges and universities, museums, and the private sector. Since its inception in 1934, SAA has endeavored to promote interest and research in American archaeology; advocate and aid in the conservation of archaeological resources; encourage public access to and appreciation of archaeology; oppose all looting of sites and the purchase and sale of looted archaeological materials; and serve as a bond among those interested in the archaeology of the Americas.

For more information on the Society for American Archaeology, visit their website at: www.saa.org.

ASCC UCEDD Holds Trainings for Disabilities Awareness Month

By ASCC Staff

Across the Pacific Rim, providers of programs and services for individuals with disabilities observed the month of March as Disabilities Awareness Month. The University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), an interdisciplinary education, research and public service component of the American Samoa Community College (ASCC), took part in the Pacific effort by holding trainings on disabilities for the local law enforcement community and stakeholders in the public.

In mid-March, the UCEDD held a three-day training for law enforcement officers titled "Equal Justice for People with Disabilities". During the event, presenters Tafa Tua-Tupuola, UCEDD Director, and Alexander Sunia, Consumer Consultant, worked to familiarize officers with the issues they may face when interacting with individuals who have disabilities. Tua-Tupuola and Sunia provided insights to help police officers recognize when someone has a disability which may not at first appear obvious, such as mental retardation, and how to avoid misunderstandings which can lead to unfortunate circumstances such as false arrest or even a false conviction.

"We covered a number of techniques officers can use more effectively to communicate with individuals with disabilities. For example, how the accused individual's level of understanding, the police need to deliver a Warning," explained Tua-Tupuola. "Law enforcement personnel should develop an understanding of mental disabilities, and how these difficulties in appropriate interaction between the disabled and the police. This pertains to individuals with disabilities as victims, witnesses, suspects, and defendants." officers took part in the training, and their evaluations indicated about how to better serve the Territory's individuals with disabilities. "The evaluations showed a willingness to learn more about how to better serve the disabled and the police. This pertains to individuals with disabilities as victims, witnesses, suspects, and defendants." The police officers who participated will receive a Certificate of Participation.



The staff of the University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities at ASCC consists of (right to left) Director Tafa Tua-Tupuola, administrative assistant Sina Falaniko, and interdisciplinary and research trainer David J. Gabriel.

(Photo: J. Kneubuhl)

"Our counterpart

at the University of Southern California and University of California in Los Angeles are working closely with the Los Angeles Police Department to develop a training manual for LAPD," Tua-Tupuola added. "We hope to have this manual available by the time we hold our next training for law enforcement. We truly appreciate the collaborative support from the Commissioner of Public Safety and Deputy Commissioner Mike Fuiava for coordinating the training, and we hope we'll have the opportunity to do more of these."

On March 24th, the UCEDD presented a second training, a "Human Sexuality and Disabilities Workshop" for individuals with disabilities, their families, public health workers and service providers. "We held the workshop as a means of initiating education and awareness of all aspects of sexuality for our special needs population, who have the same rights as everyone else to start a family and express their sexuality," explained co-presenter David J. Gabriel of the UCEDD. To cover topics such as the importance of the quality of life and where sexuality plays a great part, communication about sexuality, dating, myths, and precautions, Gabriel and Tua-Tupuola called upon a number of local health professionals to assist in the various presentations, including Tele Hill of Public Health, Faalu Faletose Iuli of the Coalition for Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse, Dr. John Ah Ching of the OBGYN Clinic at LBJ Hospital, and Mary Time of Family Planning.

Addressing the sensitive nature of the workshop, Gabriel reflected, "We must break the silence and provide more education on sexuality issues to the Territory's children and adults with disabilities. They too can have independent or semi-independent lives, and so they need to express their sexuality and form healthy relationships with the same independence. As individuals with disabilities seek to develop healthy sexual relationships and make the transition to having a family and so forth, they need education not only to help them accommodate their certain needs, but also to prevent potential abuse and victimization."

number of techniques officers should understand level of disability effects his or especially in instances where clearly understood Miranda Tupuola. "Law enforcement understanding of mental disabilities, and how these difficulties in appropriate disabled and the police. This disabilities as victims, defendants." A total of 92 training, and their evaluations their willingness to learn more Territory's individuals with included requests from the in mental illness, interview and individuals with disabilities, training," said Tua-Tupuola. participated will receive a

UCEDD Centers at the

For more information on the UCEDD, call the main ASCC line at 699-9155 and ask for Tafa Tua-Tupuola or David Gabriel.